The CHINESE RUG BOOK

MARY CHURCHILL RIPLEY

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THE CHINESE RUG BOOK

PLATE I

METAL AND SILK RUG ATTRIBUTED TO THE MING DYNASTY

THE CHINESE RUG BOOK

BY

MARY CHURCHILL RIPLEY

Author of
"The Oriental Rug Book." etc.

WITH SEVENTEEN HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

THE classifications of Chinese rugs adopted by different students must necessarily vary. As there are no existing records of the evolution of the Chinese weaver's art, its traditional history can play no part in the formation of opinions. Therefore the classification of rugs must depend upon the recognition of certain technical peculiarities in them. These peculiarities reveal methods that either antedate or follow other methods of which we have a knowledge which makes it possible to place objects relatively with a great amount of accuracy. The technical peculiarities that support trained opinion have been explained in the following chapters. They have to do with materials used by weavers,

with the colors of these materials, and with the various methods of weaving them.

It may readily be seen, as has been demonstrated, that designs in rugs admit of entirely different classification from that of the fabrics themselves. Only when both weaving and design are studied together is substantial evidence acquired that will corroborate all theories in regard to the time and place of manufacture, for the same designs were used by weavers who lived centuries apart. The effect of time and age on materials and colors must be noted before classing any fabric as antique, however old the design may be.

A knowledge of the art of China as applied to pottery, porcelain, enamels, and various of the handicrafts has been acquired of late years. It is now no longer a matter of speculation when the various styles were introduced, but of fact.

The textiles of China may be grouped in the same way as the porcelains, for the same impulses developed the one as the other. China's relation to the rest of the world brought about changes in native styles, and the unsettled condition of the empire itself caused the development of art in one portion while it languished in another. A knowledge of the inter-relation of nations makes it possible to trace the subtle external influences which marked the art of China.

Over one thousand years ago Arab traders visited China, and protection has been granted Moslems by different Chinese emperors all through the centuries. Thus it may readily be seen that Arab influences entered the south of China and that commodities were exchanged at a very early date. Overland too these same zealous traders forced their way and carried from

West to East the symbols and emblems of their faith.

From India, Buddhism influenced both directly and indirectly the art of the south of China, where Buddhist ornament is found in very early specimens of weaving. Tibet always having shown an independent handling of the religion of Buddha has given to the "elder brother" country its own special ornament with the tribute rendered.

Mongol tyranny under Genghis Khan (twelfth century) and Tamerlane (fourteenth century) brought with it symbolism of a different sort which, from time to time, has swept with resistless force over the entire empire.

It is customary to begin the classification of Chinese rugs with the Great Ming (illustrious) dynasty, when the arts were

patronized and developed by royalty and the wealthy classes.

The founder of the Ming dynasty was a native of China, and a Buddhist who endeavored to emancipate his fellow countrymen from Taoist superstition (which had prevailed under the preceding or Yuan dynasty) and to establish Buddhist reforms.

The ornate character of Buddhist art enriched early Ming designs with floral forms, and the lotus, peony, and the tea flower were embroidered on robes, painted on porcelains, and woven in rugs. Gold and silver in decoration led to the enrichment of floor coverings and tapestries, so that in the southern capital and in the homes of wealthy mandarins were to be found textiles showing designs in relief upon gold and silver backgrounds. These fabrics became so sumptuous and magnificent that finally under late Ming influ-

ences they reached their height and gave inspiration to Europe as well as various parts of the Orient.

The forces then that made Ming products what they were are easily recognized: a high state of cultivation within the empire itself and the influx of ideas from without which taught shadow and perspective and altered far more than one would at first imagine the traditional art of China itself.

The struggle for supremacy between southern culture and Mongolian force resulted in a long period of inaction early in the seventeenth century, followed by an awakening in the north, due to the establishing in Peking of the Manchu dynasty with K'ang'hsi the first ruler of note (1662-1722). Intent upon making use of all existing good, he gathered at his capital

those who could help him to bring to perfection the arts of the empire.

The Jesuit missionaries assisted in acquainting him with a knowledge of the styles of Europe, and the Mogul emperors of India, who were stimulating the arts in their own country, aided and encouraged his enthusiasm.

It is recorded in the annals of the empire that the enamels of France which had been sent to the Manchu emperor by Louis XIV excited great admiration and stimulated Chinese art to a noticeable extent.

Father Ricci, the Jesuit scientific court adviser, who had been instrumental in providing the Ming emperors with artists, initiated the Chinese in Western methods of decoration, and schools were established in various parts of China during the early years of the present dynasty, where Jesuit priests furnished models for art workers.

K'ang-hsi was emperor for sixty years—from 1662 to 1722—and styles Indian, Persian, Tibetan, and Mohammedan have each contributed their share toward what has become a truly Chinese style and may always be recognized as such.

Rugs were made more universally during the K'ang-hsi period in China than they had been before, though the products of Ming have never been excelled.

During the reign of Yung-cheng a definite method was adopted of showing in weaving the ribbed effects that were being produced in porcelains of the period and in Peking enamels.

In the Kien-lung period the use of red and blue favoring Tibetan suggestion marked that era with a special peculiarity.

	A. D.
SUNG dynasty	960-1127
YUAN dynasty	1280-1349

MING dynasty	1368-1644
Yung-lo	1403-1424
Hsuante	1426-1435
Ch'enghwa	1465-1487
Ch'engte	1506-1521
Wanli	1573-1629
T'CHING dynasty	1644
K'ang-hsi	1662-1722
Yung-chêng	1723-1735
Kien-lung . . . . . (Chienlung)	1736-1796
Chiach'ing	1796-1820
Taokuang	1820-1850

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CHAPTER I

HISTORIC PERIODS IN CHINESE ART

AT whatever actual time the Chinese rugs were made which now exist in collections and museums, the designs used by their makers may be readily classed as belonging to one or another of five great styles that have made Chinese art what it is.

Looking into the remote past for the influences that produced the first of the great styles, we find convincing evidence that, on ancient bronzes and sacrificial vessels and implements used by Confucianists and Taoists, the designs mythological, naturalistic and geometric are to be found, which have been copied all through the centuries. These

designs were native to China, had to do with ancestor worship and the worship of heaven and earth, and were elemental and crude in conception and execution; but as they were originally drawn they were often copied in facsimiles of later date.

With the entrance of Buddhism into China during the first century of our era, the great flood of new thought brought about changes in existing ornament, and developed much that was entirely new, making the second period in the styles in Chinese ornament. With Buddhism came the decorative impulse, and though the new cult seized much that it found ready for its adoption, it also added new ideas that were easily grafted upon the native stock; and whether or not some of the features ordinarily claimed to be Buddhist antedated the Christian era, it is true that the designs

created by Buddhism are different from those of the earlier period.

During the Sung dynasty, the third of the great styles developed. The philosophers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries reverted to the past in their studies, and their comments and conclusions furnished art with a net-work of ideas, from which many intricate philosophical and occult designs evolved. Neither the entrance of Mohammedan, Roman Catholic or Mongolian ideas materially changed the historic ornament of China prior to the Sung dynasty. The motifs they supplied were mingled with those of later periods into which they merged.

The Ming dynasty gave birth to the fourth period in the styles of Chinese ornament, and during its continuance, from the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, both Moham-

medan and European influences marked art in many ways. During this period there was employed in art work a superlative abundance of decorative schemes, and objects of rare beauty were made at the instigation of the Ming emperors.

The fifth great epoch in the production of Chinese styles began with the Emperor K'ang-hsi of the Tartar dynasty, and extended for one hundred years until the latter part of the eighteenth century. The influence of Persia and the middle Orient was felt very much during this period, and differentiated its ornament from all that had gone before.

The historic ornament of China as applied to the decoration of rugs may be divided into these five great styles. From these styles weavers have appropriated the designs best adapted to the limitations of their looms, and oftentimes, when ornament

PLATE II

TWO NOTABLE 18TH CENTURY RUGS WITH
DESIGNS TAKEN FROM ANTIQUE BRONZES

Plate II

as applied to some other of the industrial arts is copied by weavers, great freedom is noticeable in the handling of designs. The arts are interdependent, and the objects produced by jade, ivory, and wood carvers, bronze mirror makers and potters have furnished rug weavers with many of their most attractive inspirations. These five styles may be subdivided, contracted or extended for specific purposes, but the broad classification is all that is necessary in the study of rugs.

CHAPTER II

MATERIALS USED IN CHINESE RUGS

THE Chinese rugs which are available for examination and study today, about which expert students have a right to speculate, and in regard to which trained opinion is of great value, are made with a pile of either fine or coarse wool, hair, or silk, seldom if ever of either cotton or jute. Sometimes the wool is so coarse that it has the appearance of jute, and rugs are often classified as jute that are in reality of coarse hair or wool. Japanese rugs that imitate Persian and Chinese are made of cotton or jute, and need not be mistaken for the products which they imitate, as they are distinctive and may be very easily placed.

Although it is generally possible to determine at a glance the material used in the pile of Chinese rugs, it is necessary to remove a single knot from the rug and untwist it in order to come to definite conclusion in regard to the methods employed in the preparation of the materials. Hand spinning is easily detected, as it is generally possible to pull apart the filaments and turn the wool back again into its original condition when it has been crudely prepared by domestic process, whereas it is quite impossible to do this with machine twisted wool, hair, or silk, which has been stretched and drawn out of all resemblance to natural wool or cocoon silk. The test of burning is absolute and one has only to burn cotton, silk, wool and hair, one after the other, in order to be able to see the variations in the way fire affects the different products. The sense of smell aids

PLATE III

MING DYNASTY RUG CARRYING ARCHAIC FOLIATE DRAGON DESIGN

PLATE III

that of sight, burning wool emitting a vastly different odor from either cotton or silk. With these methods at hand for drawing definite conclusions, it is comparatively easy to avoid all mistakes in the classification of materials.

The nature of the hair in Chinese rugs varies. Camel's hair is easily recognized, both in superior and inferior grades. There is a softness and spring to the hairs, and, under a strong glass, variations in their size are noticeable. Many Chinese rugs are made of a coarse hair which resembles cow's hair. These are generally known as Yak rugs in the Occident and are readily distinguishable, whatever animal actually yielded the hair used in their manufacture. The use to-day of certain materials leads to the inference that the same were used in the past. This conclusion is useful as it

enables one to classify the rugs to-day in collections either public or private.

The pile in many of the most interesting rugs that have been made in China is of very coarse hair twisted with the most ordinary grade of wool. These rugs generally bear designs which correspond in crudity with the material used in their manufacture. The wools in Chinese rugs vary and admit of careful analysis. In rugs made prior to the nineteenth century the wools seem to have greater spring, vigor and glint than those which were made during the last century by more refined processes.

When very soft wool loosely twisted is used in early Ming fabrics, several strands are found in each knot tied, which as they untwist make a fine surface almost like velvet. While wool is used in the weft and sometimes in the warp in rugs of the

Western part of the Chinese Empire and in Tibet, we rarely if ever find a wool web in the rugs of Eastern China. Cotton very crudely prepared appears in warp and woof in Chinese rugs both coarse and fine but cotton is very rarely used in the pile. This material has been adopted by the Japanese, who closely imitate in cotton and jute the wool and silk rugs of China, Persia and other parts of the Orient.

Technical methods of preparing materials become apparent to the trained eye. The careful cleansing of natural products, while it refines them, sometimes takes from the charm of crude methods of preparation. Loose spinning and irregular yarn indicate that the fabric was made before the introduction of process work of any kind in the place of its manufacture, and though labor is simplified and reduced by mechanical means, there is a vastly differ-

ent appearance to rugs made under modern factory control from those produced independently by domestic process. The same conclusions may be drawn regarding the preparation of silk. Hard and compact surfaces are produced by the use of carefully prepared silk while soft and crude effects are due to the use of inferior grades of silk and often to the use of a raw tram silk spun direct from the cocoons. This analysis, while in no way adding to or taking from the appreciation of the beauty of a rug, aids materially in determining its age.

PLATE IV

LATE MING DYNASTY RUG WITH CORROSIVE BROWN OUTER BORDER. FOLIATE DRAGONS IN MEDALLION

PLATE IV

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF WEAVING CHINESE RUGS

THE Chinese observe the ordinary methods employed all through the Orient in the weaving of pile carpets, the difference in the finished product being due to slight technical variations that serve as ear-marks for identification. These may be noted in the warp and woof threads, and in the way the knots, the ends of which make the pile, are tied. Even without actual historical records of how and when Chinese fabrics were made, it is quite possible to divide existing specimens in such a way as to determine the relation of one fabric to another; the changes from domestic to factory weaving and preparation of

materials being quite apparent to the analyst.

In many old rugs the warp threads are of soft loosely twisted cotton, the threads varying in thickness, and there are only about six or eight warp threads to an inch, even in rugs that appear on the surface to be fine and compactly woven. The woof threads in such rugs generally separate only three rows of knots to the inch and are held in place by warp threads which have been separated for their insertion by most primitive methods. It is quite possible to note that in making the yarn used for these woof threads, the cotton has been twisted by twirling the shaft between the fingers and the thumb in a very primitive way. The shuttles that have been used to separate warp threads in antique rugs made for ordinary use were, judging from the work accomplished by them, clumsy and large

and incapable of producing fine and compact work.

With the refinement of implements and processes a loss as well as a gain has been accomplished, virility and simplicity of conception giving place at times to less vigor with advance in skill. Sometimes several woof threads are twisted loosely together before they are wound on the shuttle, and after taking their places in the web they separate and appear like four threads, even when the shuttle is only thrown back and forth once between each two rows of knots. This description has to do with the rugs of Eastern China. The rugs of Western China and of Chinese Turkestan, and many of the rugs of Manchuria, of Northern China and the "cold countries" carry woof threads of wool and in some instances the entire web is woven of wool strands for both warp and woof.

The knots in Chinese pile weaving are made by carrying the yarn under one strand (A) of the warp and over the second strand (B), which it surrounds, the end to appear between the two threads A and B. This gives a knot end between every two warp threads. In parting the pile on the surface, it is possible to expose one of every pair of warp threads (thread A for example) as only one strand of each pair is encircled completely by the pile wool. With Turkish knots it is impossible to do this, as both strands of each pair of the warp threads are encircled. Chinese knots are tied exactly as Persian or Sinneh knots, differing from them in

PLATE V

THE DESIGN IN THE BORDER OF THIS RUG IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT, BEING ADAPTED FROM SIMILAR DESIGN ON VERY ANCIENT BRONZE

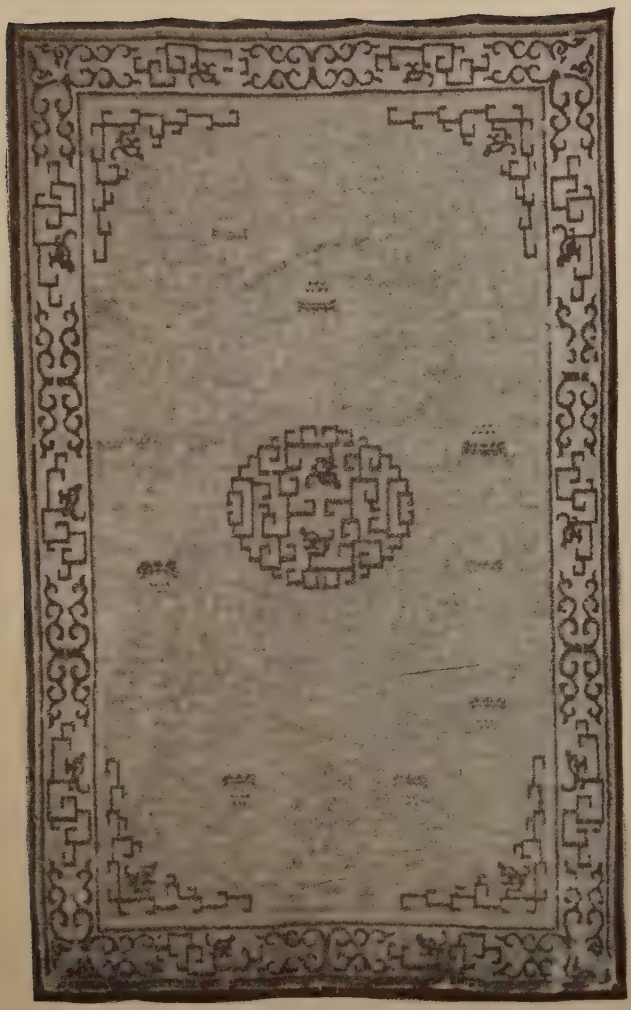


PLATE V

appearance simply because of the more slazy quality of the loose web.

In silk rugs, warp, woof and pile are apt to be of silk, though sometimes, to cheapen the product, the woof strands are of cotton. The weft in some very old silk rugs consists of coarse silk, about which a strong silk thread is twisted. Some of the fine silk rugs of the Ming dynasty show this interesting feature.

There are certain technical peculiarities in weaving that have produced styles now known as Ming, K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng, Kien-lung and Tao-kuang. In the classification of Chinese rugs, allusion is more often made to monarchs than to centuries, for styles evolved under the patronage of one or another sovereign, and these styles, with the influence upon them of foreign conquest and intercourse with other nations,

eventually resulted in producing the various schemes adopted by weavers.

Early Ming rugs divide themselves into two classes—those made at the behest of royalty for the private use of princes and sovereigns, and those that were made for ordinary domestic or temple use. There are fine old silk fabrics with a close-cut pile resembling velvet, which illustrate different methods of weaving—one method being that of making the rug entirely of silk, by tying the knots which make the pile upon a silk warp which is penetrated between each two rows of knots by a silk weft thread. Another, and the most commonly accepted method, was to make both warp and woof of cotton and only the pile of silk.

The sumptuous rugs known as the metal and silk products of the Ming dynasty are among the most marvellous fruits of the loom. The design is shown in relief upon

a flat background of metal, in which both gold and silver threads are used. This same general style of weaving obtains in other countries, but there are slight technical differences which reveal variations in the methods employed. In some rugs, for example, the metal forms the woof which penetrates the warp threads as in ordinary weaving and is packed so closely that it makes a solid appearance and a smooth metallic surface. In others, upon a web of cotton, a chain-stitch of metal thread is carried across from side to side of the rug, making an embroidered surface. The same appearance is obtained in the weavings of other parts of the Orient by encircling each warp thread by a single woof thread back and forth across the width of the stretched warp, producing a herringbone pattern.

The name "Late Ming" is given to a style of rugs woven before Persian influence

was strongly felt in the designs forced upon Chinese weavers. Only a few of the rugs classified are obtainable at the present time and in them the colors are soft and the general effect subdued. Yellow tan, which has faded from apricot, and two shades of blue, with a dark brown natural wool, are the only colors used in the pile of the late Ming rugs of this style.

Beside copying Ming styles, K'ang-hsi rugs show Persian influence in design, and the color schemes, even where later designs are used, are similar to those of the late Ming period. Manchurian ideas and colors are noticeable in late K'ang-hsi rugs and in the Yung-cheng period such are included. With Kien-lung came the Turkestan, East Indian and Samarcand influences, as well as the development and demonstration of designs and methods purely Chinese, so that the Kien-lung period of sixty

PLATE VI

RUG SUGGESTING BOTH IN WEAVE AND DESIGN THE COARSE CARPETS MADE IN THE NORTHERN COLD COUNTRIES, DESCRIBED BY FATHER GERBILLON IN 1697

PLATE VI

years, covering as it did the greater part of the eighteenth century, included in its products a reproduction of almost everything that had gone before, as well as much of additional interest and beauty.

Eighteenth century weavings are distinguishable, however, from those of earlier periods, and the fabrics themselves must be relied upon to authenticate specimens. Broadly speaking, then, it is advisable to divide the antique rugs of China into five periods: first, sixteenth and seventeenth century Ming; second, K'ang'hsi; third, Yung-cheng; fourth, Kien-lung; fifth, Tao-kuang or early nineteenth century. Rugs of the Kwang-su period, made during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, differ entirely from the factory and commercial rugs made to-day, and may be classed as native products and are often most beautiful and alluring.

CHAPTER IV

COLORS EMPLOYED BY CHINESE WEAVERS

CHINESE rugs *en masse* have a vastly different appearance from a corresponding number of Persian, Indian or Turkish fabrics. Even when they are thrown with rugs of other makes, it is possible to detect Chinese rugs at a glance. Why this is so is perchance a debatable question, though without doubt most students who have given the subject any consideration would not hesitate to say that it is due to the lack in Chinese rugs of primary red, and the substitution of varying secondary shades, such as the fruit reds, apricot, persimmon, pomegranate and peach, that give the fabrics a Chinese ap-

pearance in spite of the fact that yellows and blues are often as strong and strictly primary in tone in Chinese as in other rugs.

The colors employed by the Chinese differ from those used by Persian rug weavers, in that the Chinese palette is the smaller. Where the Persians would introduce a dozen tones, the Chinese content themselves with four or five. We find in rugs of one class two shades of yellow, two shades of blue and cream color. In another two shades of blue, cream color and apricot red. In another two shades of yellow, two shades of cream and apricot. In another two shades of blue, cream, brown and two shades of yellow. A Persian rug classing with these would have yellow, two shades of blue, cream, several shades of green, fire-color, turquoise-blue and many shades of red. In Chinese rugs, however important, one fails to find many colors. The

PLATE VII

RUG BEARING A K'ANG-HSI DESIGN WHICH SHOWS WESTERN INFLUENCE

PLATE VII

rugs of Chinese-Turkestan and of the Samarcand district lean toward Indian and Persian methods of introducing colors, but strictly Chinese rugs only show four or five tones.

In studying the limited palette of the Chinese weaver it is interesting to begin with the use made of natural colored wools and hair. The fawn colors, which are strictly Chinese, differ somewhat from the tan colors of Hamadan camel's hair. The coarse hair of the yak and the wool both coarse and fine from native sheep, give endless variety to the quality of the materials used, which furnish the varying shades of fawn, tan, and light and dark brown in Chinese rugs.

A very dark brown that is sometimes found in Chinese rugs is of so corrosive a nature that the wool dyed with it is often entirely gone from rugs in which the wools

of every other color are in perfect condition. We only occasionally find an old Chinese rug in which this peculiar shade of dark brown shows no wear whatever, and on examination the material proves to be of natural color and a blackish brown wool or hair. Such are without doubt the original color and material used, of which the brown, dyed with corrosive dye, is a copy. Colors found in existing antique specimens to-day are invaluable as guides to the study of the color scheme thought out by old weavers. Some of these shades accidentally obtained have never been equalled by the intentional mingling of colors, and have different values, according to the materials to which they are applied. There is however enough likeness between rugs of silk and those of wool of any period to make it possible to place them together, though the shades of color vary somewhat.

In small fragments of very old Chinese rugs, and in copies of them, natural colored wools and hair are used in combination or in varying tones of the same color. Simple floral or symbolic objects are worked in a bleached white, while the body of the rug is of unbleached wool. Camel's hair is varied with dark wool and several shades of tan are so mingled as to show lines of solid colors surrounding a figured field.

Blue in Chinese rugs when combined with white shows as varying results as does the mingling of the same colors in Chinese porcelains. To Chinese blues many names have been applied which obtain with more or less accuracy. There is the indigo or deep strong blue found in the rugs of both Northern and Southern China, and the azure blue which is almost never found in rugs later than the eighteenth century. Sapphire blue found in Kien-lung Chinese-

Turkestan rugs is unlike the light blue of either earlier or later periods. Silver blue appears in Peking rugs and grey blue in the products of Ning-hsi and the Northern provinces.

With white also we find limitless variations, so that a blue and white wool rug of China may show blue of any of the well known shades with quite as wide a range of tones in the white wool employed in the field. Cream and ash white, egg-shell white and clay color, grey white and putty color, silver white and *blanc de chine*, are a few of the numberless shades employed in making the so-called blue and white rugs of China and as in porcelains, so in textiles, never does the color known as the "blue shown in a rift in the clouds after rain" appear to such advantage as when blue is combined with the cloud white most closely related to it.

PLATE VIII

A SCHOLAR'S RUG. RUGS CARRYING NINE LIONS IN THE DESIGN ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN WOVEN FOR THE "LITERATI"

Plate VIII

The various shades of red are more difficult to define than any of the other colors employed by Chinese weavers. From whatever natural product they are obtained, they are of entirely different nature from the reds of any other country. Names that have been so often used as finally to seem of value and importance in classifying Chinese reds are pomegranate, persimmon, apricot, peach and fire-color. The blood red found in old Samarcands and rugs of Turkestan and Tibet, never appears in the wool rugs of China, though occasionally a vivid ruby red is found in Chinese silk fabrics. Antique Chinese fruit reds are heavy with yellow and are utterly lacking in cerise and rose tints.

Imperial yellow commands with Mandarin yellow the interest of all who endeavor to demonstrate the subtle differences that make for distinction and importance

in the textiles of China. There is not an orange tint in the imperial yellow found in rugs, but there is enough red in the dye to prevent any verging toward lemon color, which of late years has distinguished modern products. Mandarin yellow favors orange color and yet differs entirely from fire-color in which there is almost as much orange color as red. No green is apparent in Chinese rugs that antedate the Kien-lung period, and only in rugs made after 1875 is there to be found the glaringly bad greenish yellow that at once testifies to the age of wools dyed with modern coal tar products.

The fugitive nature of some of the Chinese fruit reds causes them to fade out to a dull brown or yellow, and oftentimes a rug of tawny golden hue will upon close examination be found to have no yellow whatever in the pile, and the beautiful re-

sult has been brought about by the effect of time and slow fading, the yellow tones alone remaining after the vegetable or fruit reds have disappeared entirely. The dyers of China at the present time mix with the twigs of logwood the juice of certain berries to give the yellow cast which characterizes Chinese reds. Any theories concerning ancient methods of dyeing materials in China are however largely speculative; and only with the present conditions of textiles is it possible to deal.

As far as we are able to determine by study of the rugs of China themselves, there has been no servile allegiance whatever shown by weavers to the significance of colors. Chinese color symbolism is more accurate and direct than any of the ancient schemes for the use of colors, and in many branches of art it obtains and may be depended upon, though not in rug weaving.

There are five colors considered sacred in China, each one supposed to be related to various natural objects and phenomena. One and another method is observed by authorities in the arrangement of these colors, the sequence most commonly accepted being black, green, red, white, yellow.

PLATE IX

KIEN-LUNG RUG CARRYING LATE 18TH CENTURY FLORAL DESIGN

PLATE IX

CHAPTER V

DESIGNS FOUND IN CHINESE RUGS

DESIGNS native and borrowed in Chinese rugs do not apparently belong to families, tribes or localities as they do in other parts of the Orient. The patriarchal nature of the native religions forced the use of certain objects in all parts of the Empire, which were made in stereotyped fashion and which bore accepted designs. It would appear that weavers copied the designs that had been thought out by craftsmen in the decoration of other objects long ago. These objects were presumably of bronze and to the sacrificial bronzes of early Chinese dynasties we may legitimately look for many of the designs which inspired both potters and weavers. How-

ever dissimilar may be the designs that cover the field in Chinese rugs, the border designs bear close resemblance to each other. In them, frets and formal arrangements of Chinese motifs antedate the foliate scroll ornament of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In keeping to the five periods in the classification of Chinese rugs, it is possible to describe with a certain amount of accuracy the designs that are most often found in them. The field in many early Ming domestic products, in which the color tones are low and harmonious, carries an all-over design built upon the regular arrangement of well known and symbolic forms. The Joo-e often forms the design at the top, bottom and sides of spaces eight or ten inches square, the centers of which are filled with bats, peaches, or signs of longevity, happiness, or good luck. Octagon forms

are sometimes spread over the entire field of a rug, carrying alternately coiled archaic dragon forms and some symbolic fruits. This repeat design is somewhat monotonous, at the same time in no other Chinese rugs are the results more harmonious and suggestive of native thought.

Another method of covering the field in early Ming rugs is to work the ground in solid color, upon which are distributed dots or stripes suggestive of tiger or leopard skins, which without doubt they copied. In the center of rugs of this class are large squares of another color, in which are grouped mythological objects most crudely drawn. Examination of the borders which commonly surround rugs of this special style is most helpful in determining the age of specimens, for when old styles are copied in the field, borders of late date are sometimes used. This often proves a rug to be

a copy, which otherwise might have been considered an original.

In early weavings the borders are few in number and not very wide—in fact in very early borders there appear only a few stripes, varying in color, around the entire fabric. In addition to these stripes, which were retained as outer or limiting band, an inner border was eventually added carrying a swastika fret or some typically Chinese geometric form. Signs of "shou" and bats were used as over-laid ornaments upon these frets. A favorite method of decoration with early weavers consisted in placing archaic dragon forms in conventional corner designs, and using the same motif in the central medallion, the borders in such rugs carrying elongated forms of the same dragon scroll.

In the sumptuous metal and silk rugs of the Ming dynasty, weavers gave themselves

PLATE X

THE FIELD OF THIS RUG CARRIES A "GRAINS-OF-RICE" DESIGN. THE OUTER BORDER IS UNUSUAL

PLATE X

greater license in every way. Nothing more ornate, rich and extremely brilliant can be imagined than the rugs they produced. To the art rather than the craft of the weaver do such belong, and in ordinary collections they are rarely seen. When they appear they explain themselves.

In the K'ang-hsi period we find many different styles, each one more or less distinctive. There is the carrying on of the tawny golden brown color scheme that obtains in the Ming styles, while the designs employed show distinctively Persian influence. The attempt at formalism which introduced radiating designs and a forcing of foreign motifs into compartments is an early K'ang-hsi method, but this was not fully developed until later, when Kien-lung weavers adopted it and used it extensively. The Western Lotus appears in K'ang-hsi rugs, drawn in a way unlike any Chinese

rendering of plant form prior to the latter part of the seventeenth century. This floral form with its accompanying stiffly arranged foliation spreads over the field of rugs that carry border stripes of solid colors of about the same general tone as those employed in the field.

The aster and peony are conventionalized for all-over decoration, in the same way that the lotus is used in this class of K'ang-hsi rugs, and are more suggestive of Persian influence than even the lotus design. More frequently too in the peony than in the lotus design, an attempt is made to introduce floral forms in the broad border stripe.

The development of Yung-cheng and Manchurian styles shows, first, a mingling of earlier schemes with a freer use of both palette and decoration, succeeded later on by a definite style which bears the same

relation to weaving as do the enamels of Peking to porcelains. Distinctly different was this method, which consisted in outlining the objects used in decoration with contrasting colors, the pile of the outline being clipped in such a way as to make a depression, which threw into relief the object it surrounded. Under whatever influence this style developed, it is known as Yung-cheng, and there are accounts in old records which testify to the fact that the copying of Peking enamels in the eighteenth century produced this result. The dark blue grounds, with floral decorations in cream, yellow and apricot, are presumably of the same period as those showing ribbed outlines and relief effects.

Manchurian rugs made under royal patronage are closely woven, and in them are colors that differ from any found during the Ming period. In Manchurian rugs

of the early eighteenth century, the designs assumed a regular style. Circular forms, or medallions, were placed at intervals over the field, which was covered with an indistinct swastika fret work. The use of geometric dragon forms in these medallions antedates the more frequently found conventionalized flowers. Dragon scrolls and frets were introduced in the border. In early Manchurian rugs, mythological and symbolic designs alternated with the floral arrangements that developed in the southern part of the Empire about the same time. Whether legitimately so or not, in the separation of Chinese rugs for purposes of trade classification, styles have been apportioned to different localities in China.

Canton and Nankin products hold the same relation to each other in the output of textiles as of porcelains, in that a greater refinement is noticed in the designs of Nan-

PLATE XI

A RUG OF GREAT BEAUTY IN WHICH THE EMBLEMS OF THE "LITERATI" ARE SHOWN WITH VARIOUS PRECIOUS OBJECTS IN THE FIELD

PLATE XI

kin than in those of Canton. Cantonese trees, Cantonese rocks and tea-houses, Cantonese renderings of Taoist ornament, Cantonese flowers differ from Nankin floral patterns, just as Canton Willow pattern porcelains differ from the same design painted in Nankin in the olden time, or as the Nankin design called "Fitzhugh" pattern differs from others more crudely drawn. In the weavings of the Shantung Province, designs adopted by weavers in all the other parts of the Empire have been copied, and in rugs bearing the name of Tien-tsin all styles seem to have been gathered up and exported under the general name of that port; just as in Japan, when from the port of Imari everything made at Arita and in the Hizen Province was shipped to Europe, the name of the port was given to wares that were never made there, but were only shipped from that

place. It is therefore easy to understand the difficulties in the way of those handling the products of the past about which no records can be found. The face value of objects, and that only, can possibly avail.

The prevalence of mythological animals in Chinese rug designs is a noteworthy feature. Dogs in vast numbers appear playing with balls and spherical objects which serve them as charms. Dragons seek their pearls, Ky-lins with sprays of fungus in their mouths lift their timid heads, and the gorgeous Fung-hwang lends its plumage to decorative effects. Mythical personages are represented by their emblems, these being floral or otherwise according to the legends about them interpreted in design. Things that symbolize ideas are meaningful as they stand related to prevalent beliefs and superstitions, and a single flower or emblem may at once suggest some historic

sequence or the relation of one important event to another.

The use of certain designs at certain periods necessitates a constant reversion to the history of the Empire as the only means of obtaining a clue to the reasons why they were selected; for example, there are certain Mohammedan designs in products of the Kien-lung period which have borne without explanation the name of Kashgarian. This may be explained by the historic fact that one of the favorites of Kien-lung was a Kashgarian princess, for whom he ordered built a special mosque near the royal residence in Peking, and for whose use he procured much that was not in the least suggestive of the native religions in China or Buddhism, but savored wholly of Moslem thought and ideas.

Passing to the consideration of the tendency to mingle mythological designs with

geometric and naturalistic ornamentation, we find it impossible to secure any clue to the reasons for some of the combinations of styles. Very rarely is any definite plan demonstrated, as in an important rug in which a picture is reproduced in wools. In the details of the composition Perso-Chinese influences are introduced, but native Chinese superstition is illustrated in the design. It is considered an auspicious omen for swallows and sacred animals to approach a dwelling, as they are supposed to bring good luck and to avert evil. In this design the deer is walking up the steps and birds hover over the roof of the house.

The story of the sacred mountain lends itself to the imagination of the Chinese artist in whatever method of expression he adopts. In the olden days this great mountain was considered the God of the Tartars. The Sacred Mountain of China, as it ap-

PLATE XII

FIVE MEDALLION RUG OF KIEN-LUNG PERIOD

PLATE XII

pears in ornament, is mythological, for while that land abounds in mountain peaks of interest, it is to the Mountain in design that allusion is here made. At the center of all things it arose from the ocean of eternity. It had to do with elemental conditions and was the first material manifestation when all was void. The mountain in Mongolian ornament is often pictured as having five peaks, sometimes only three. As an emblem in the hand of the Pearly Emperor and the Taoist priest, it is represented as a single peak, as is also the case when the symbol is held by Confucius. This emblem, together with the sceptre and the fungus, have become known and verified features in Chinese ornament.

Many primitive peoples have believed that the souls of the righteous mounted to heaven from the branches of trees or high mountains, and for this reason revered

mountains are sometimes pictured in early art as bearing a crest or crown of stars. Star myths have in this way become intimately associated with legends of mountains, and deities presiding over the events of life are by imaginative mortals given special stars for their abode. The clouds, too, form part of the conventionalized ornament that bears directly upon these considerations. In the constellation of Ursa Major, the "Great ruler" was supposed by the Mongolians to reside.

In sixteenth century carpets the cloud forms representing this constellation and the star circles themselves are preserved, but in later copies the cloud form remains with loss of meaning as a simple ornamental design. The fungus, or Joo-e, is sometimes mistaken for a cloud form in ornament, and care is necessary in deciphering and determining forms and their derivation and

meaning. When the Mongolian Tartar, three hundred years ago, wished to represent Paradise, he threw over the field of his rug a design which resembled twisted ribbons and flowing bands, which threaded their way through numberless cloud forms which connected small circles and discs representing stars. Later thought developed this design in East India and Persia, and Mohammedan influence introduced symbolic representations which deviated entirely from the original and early thought.

PLATE XIII

ARCHAIC LION RUG, ANTIQUE BOTH IN STYLE AND COLOR

PLATE XIII

CHAPTER VI

THE CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS ACCORDING TO DESIGN

IN early Ming products geometric designs are combined with archaic scroll, fret and animal motifs. Early rugs almost invariably carry either plain bands of color or very simple geometric designs in the borders and are apt to be surrounded by an outer limiting band of dark corrosive brown.

We are led by a close study of floral designs to a careful consideration of the flowers themselves which are used in conventionalization. At first they look alike, but later, when subdivisions are in order, copies of Persian styles may readily be distinguished from those showing Chinese

methods of conventionalization. The aster, peony, horse-chestnut, chrysanthemum, azalea and various orchids are sometimes drawn naturalistically but more often in a highly conventional manner.

Proceeding in the consideration of the application of design, we find that the use of a single medallion antedates the use of many medallions in the field. A late arrangement shows a well balanced ornament above and below the central medallion, so arranged as completely to fill the space.

We pass from the geometric styles of the late Ming and early K'ang-hsi periods into the later developments based upon Persian influence, which resulted in the conventionalization of floral and vegetable forms and in the gradual supplanting in the borders of archaic, by floral designs. First there was the substituting of only floral borders, then the placing of naturally drawn flowers

around, above and below the central geometric medallion, where dragon scrolls or only conventionalized ornament had previously appeared. Several uses of this new style are noted in old rugs. In the corner spaces and medallions, geometric dragon forms are placed with flowers and butterflies between them and over the field copies of old bronzes are interspersed with fungus-looking growths, Buddha's fingers, peaches, stands, implements, etc., the wide border being floral.

Following closely the development in the use of design, we find the appearance of several medallions laid either upon a plain or an all-over decorated field. These medallions became very elaborate in late eighteenth century rugs, and combined geometric, mythological and floral elements which are often meaningless and purely decorative, but perhaps more beautiful on

that account, for the lack of symbolic design in Chinese art is not always considered a loss. The building up of these medallion forms is of interest, as the central ornament in them is often unrelated to their outer border.

Nothing more significantly demonstrates the fact that designs in bronze were copied by weavers than the examination of the medallions which figure in the field of rugs. Although at first glance the discs scattered at regular intervals or in the center seem to bear close resemblance to each other, analysis of their formation will reveal the fact that they differ. They have been carefully selected, and invariably copy floral or geometric forms used by workers in bronze.

PLATE XIV

BLUE AND WHITE EIGHT MEDALLION RUG OF EARLY 18TH CENTURY

PLATE XIV

Bamboo Musical Instrument

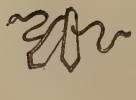
Sword

Fan

Gourd

Basket of Flowers

Lotus Pod



Castanets

Flute

EMBLEMS OF THE EIGHT IMMORTALS

The Joo-e Wand or "Sceptre"

Books

Lute

Scrolls

Chess

EMBLEMS OF THE LITERATI

Sonorous Stone

Leaf

Coin

Hollow Lozenge

Lozenge

Rhinoceros Horns

Books

Pearl

THE EIGHT ORDINARY SYMBOLS

Wheel

Knot of Destiny

Canopy

Umbrella

Lotus

Twin Fishes

Shell

Urn

EIGHT BUDDHIST EMBLEMS

PLATE XV

A PAIR OF MATS CARRYING THE SACRED MOUNTAIN DESIGN HIGHLY CONVENTIONALIZED

PLATE XV

Chinese decorative art and Chinese industry have ever progressed hand in hand. The simplest article used at the household altar, formed of soft clay and fired in a domestic kiln, may bear the same design as that which adorns the most costly censer made for the temple.

To the art of the weavers of China, attention has been turned of late years, and many rugs from the temples, palaces, and noble houses of the Empire have come into the possession of Europeans and Americans. Such cannot be too carefully analyzed and classified, as they are veritable antiques and hold in themselves the answers to many of the numberless questions which confront ethnologists and students of the religions of China.

There are designs to be found in rugs which illustrate the life of the native Chinese, of their Mongolian and Man-

churian conquerors, and of alien, tributary, and foreign peoples who have forced their ideas and technical methods upon the industrial arts of the Empire.

Many of the textiles of China, other than floor coverings, made for people of rank, have been for centuries ornamented with designs ordered by the Emperor. These designs have been copied by rug weavers and are both interesting and absolute.

On Mandarin robes and hearth rugs alike may be found the "Sacred Mountain," wands and sceptres of authority, and various precious objects and symbols. Some of these belong to one belief and some to another, so intermingled have become the three great religions of China,—Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Ever and always, however, according to the heart interest of the worker, one or the other has the prominent place, the others occupying

a secondary or supplementary relation. This human interest constitutes the chief charm in the woven fabrics of any people; the weaver is to be relied upon to introduce some suggestion of self thought, be it fear, pride, reverence, or worship.

When designs are at hand which have come down through the ages, that illustrate phases of thought, it is now and ever has been in China quite possible to make a rug symbolic of one's creed.

Broadly speaking, in order to seek things purely Chinese, one must cull those which are of Confucian origin and which have to do with ancestor worship, the worship of heaven and earth, and the adoration of scholarship. While designs symbolic of these religious expressions are often mingled with those of the other beliefs, they may readily be distinguished from them.

Most of the designs and symbols that be-

long to the literati are conceded to be of Confucian origin as well as those that illustrate the religious worship required of the Mandarins, who represent the Emperor on all festival occasions and who have charge of the ritual of the State.

Among the symbols most often used are scrolls, books, chessboards, inkstands, inkwells, and brushes, lutes, and other musical instruments, with the eight ordinary symbols:

The Hollow Lozenge	The Lozenge (solid)
The Sonorous Stone	Books
Rhinoceros Horns	Spherical Object or Pearl
The Coin	The Leaf

These emblems, tied with fillets, adorn the field of Chinese rugs, together with various other designs that may be studied in the rugs themselves.

Taoism, the religion of fear, has supplied

PLATE XVI

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RUG, SHOWING WESTERN INFLUENCE IN DESIGN

PLATE XVI

weavers with a vast number of designs which illustrate belief in stars, lucky signs, and geomantic influences. Those most frequently found in rugs are the emblems of the Eight Immortals, and the various charms used to keep off demons and evil spirits of all sorts.

The emblems of the Eight Immortals are:

The Castanets
The Basket of Flowers
The Flute
The Lotus (pod)
The Sword
The Fan
The Bamboo Musical Instrument
The Gourd

Buddhism has marked the industrial arts of China very materially, and we are apt to find some suggestion of its influence even when the origin of the main features of a design may be traced to one or the other of the beliefs of the Empire.

The eight Buddhist symbols are:

The Wheel
The Knot
The Canopy
The Umbrella
The Lotus
The Urn or Vase
The Conch Shell
The Twin Fishes

CHAPTER VII

CLASSIFICATION OF RUGS ACCORDING TO COLOR

HAVING made most careful classification of rugs in strict adherence to methods suggested, so that it is possible to form an opinion at a glance as to which of the five great styles a design belongs, it is necessary, before determining the age of each rug examined, to study both color and weave in addition to the design. Only in this way is it possible to establish belief concerning the age of the specimen itself.

In blue and white Chinese rugs the shades range from the color of unbleached wool verging on tan to the varying whites, *blanc de chine,* ivory, ash, putty and egg-shell. As rugs developed from the old tans

and blues to the blue and white period, the shades vary with definite allegiance,—first to the use, in the designs, of deep, rich sapphire blues which were laid flatly on the white field in one color; and later to the combination with this dark blue of a light and very marvellous color known as robin's egg blue.

A study of many rugs together will show the similarities and differences between the blues used, and analysis of the colored wools makes it possible to determine accurately the period of manufacture.

When shading became popular, it is an interesting point to observe that it crept but slowly into geometric design. First it was introduced into the T border, and two shades of blue were used instead of one; but it was at a later period that the swastika fret yielded itself to the influence of the

Italian school and assumed intricate and highly ornate forms.

A study of yellow, as used by the weavers of China from early times to the present, is of importance in the analysis of rugs, as many conclusive facts may be verified by close comparison of a great number of specimens. A few points of importance that lead to definite opinions are readily comprehended, and these conclusions may be applied to any groups of rugs, as interpretive and elucidating. The varieties of Chinese yellow are known as imperial, mandarin, tan, lemon, orange and citron, and it is significant that of these, lemon and citron yellow are rarely if ever found in rugs made prior to the eighteenth century, while antique yellows never have the greenish cast noticeable in late products.

Early Ming and K'ang-hsi yellows merge from dull tan color into conservative

shades of strong yellow tan, which evolve into a rich gold color. Later the yellows became heavy with red, and the desired effect in the finished product was sometimes produced by hatching a ground of yellow with apricot color, or by dotting the surface with a "grains of rice" design in some soft shades of fruit red. Varying shades of yellow are prevalent in the industrial arts of China, and in speaking of imperial yellow reference is made only to a color which bears that name. This does not necessarily suggest that the object was made for Imperial use.

CHINESE DIRECTION AND COLOR SYMBOLISM

DIRECTIONS	SEASONS	COLORS	ELEMENTS	PLANETS	METALS
North	Winter	Black	Water	Mercury	Iron
East	Spring	Green	Wood	Jupiter	Lead, Tin
South	Summer	Red	Fire	Mars	Copper
West	Autumn	White	Metal	Venus	Silver
Middle		Yellow	Earth	Saturn	Gold

Extracted from Mayer's "Chinese Reader's Manual."

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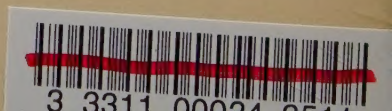

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RIPLEY, M.C.
Chinese rug book.